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REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Draft resolution recommended by the Economic and Social Council

International Year of Volunteers, 2001

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 2659 (XXV) of 7 December 1970, 31/131 of 16 December 1976, 31/166 of 21 December 1976, 40/212 of 17 December 1985 and 49/139 B of 20 December 1994, and bearing in mind decision 96/32 of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund, in which the Executive Board acknowledged the importance of the contribution made by volunteers worldwide and expressed its support for the efforts of the United Nations Volunteers to promote further volunteer work,

Taking into account its decision 35/424 of 5 December 1980 and Economic and Social Council resolution 1980/67 of 25 July 1980 concerning guidelines for international years and anniversaries,

Noting the significant contribution that volunteers make in their own countries to improve the welfare and realizing the aspirations of their fellow citizens for improved economic and social well-being, and the financing of their work largely through civil society, including the private sector, as well as the important achievements of volunteers assigned internationally to the attainment of the development goals of Member States,

Noting the assistance provided by the United Nations Volunteers, in particular to United Nations organizations and operations in the fields of social and economic development, humanitarian aid and the promotion of peace, democracy and respect for human rights, and above all in helping to link these efforts closely to the populations for whom they are intended,

Also noting the importance of new players taking the initiative at the local, national and international levels, particularly individuals and organizations of civil society, in partnership with Governments, as emphasized in the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development,[1]

Bearing in mind the conclusion of the Fourth World Conference on Women, that women should be enabled to benefit from lifelong learning, including volunteer activity,[2] and noting that much volunteer activity is performed by women and that such socially useful work should be appropriately recognized and supported,

Convinced that the need for volunteer effort is greater than ever in light of the adverse impact of such global problems as environmental degradation, poverty, drug abuse and human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome on the more vulnerable sectors of society, and of the trend for civil society, in partnership with government and the private sector, to assume ever greater responsibilities in the development process,

Also convinced that a year designed to enhance the recognition, facilitation, networking and promotion of volunteer service, with particular emphasis upon activity at the local level, could make a significant contribution to generating increased awareness of the achievements and further potential of volunteer service, to encouraging offers to service from a greatly expanded number of individuals and to channelling resources to augment the effectiveness of such service,

Noting with satisfaction that the proposal for the year has gained widespread support within civil society,

1. Proclaims 2001 the International Year of Volunteers;

2. Invites Governments, the United Nations system and intergovernmental, volunteer and non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations to collaborate and identify ways and means of enhancing the recognition, facilitation, networking and promotion of volunteer service in the preparations for and observance of the Year;

3. Designates the United Nations Volunteers programme, without prejudice to existing priorities, as the focal point for preparations, implementation and follow-up of the Year in close collaboration with other organizations of the United Nations system, and encourages the United Nations Volunteers to continue the process of close collaboration and partnership with Governments and

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[1] Report of the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 6-12 March 1995 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.8), chap. I, resolution 1.

[2] Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II, para. 73.

international and national volunteer and non-governmental organizations, in particular, with regard to the preparations for and implementation of the Year;

4. Invites policy-making organs and the relevant organizations of the United Nations system to consider, in the context of their substantive mandates, the principles and objectives of the Year, making special efforts through new and existing programmes during the period 1998-2001 and to pursue follow-up action to the Year for the benefit of all countries and peoples;

5. Appeals to Member States, as well as all other participants in the observance of the Year, to highlight 2001 as a special occasion benefiting the peoples of the world in their quest for a better life for all, based on the voluntary commitment of individuals and groups to make available their time and share their resources and skills in the interest of those less advantaged;

6. Calls for a concerted promotional and information campaign on behalf of the Year at the national, regional and international levels, with the strong participation of the mass media;

7. Requests the Secretary-General to take specific measures, within existing resources and with support from voluntary resources, through all the communications media at his disposal, in particular within the mandate of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat, to give widespread publicity to the preparations for and observance of the Year and to disseminate information on the subject.